METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CLIENT SHARING
OF CACHED CONTENT

Abstract of the Disclosure

A method and apparatus are disclosed for distributing content to multiple users, including at least one broadcast-enabled user. A broadcast-enabled user receives content for storage in a client-side cache over a broadcast connection and shares the cached content with one or more other users (who may or may not be broadcast-enabled users). Users that are not broadcast-enabled users can access the broadcast information and broadcast-enabled users can potentially access a richer set of cached information by sharing the cached information with other broadcast-enabled users. A central cache directory identifies one or more broadcast-enabled users that can provide each cached content item, such as each Web page. A client initially determines if desired content is available in a local client cache (Step 1) or a local broadcast cache, if available (Step 2), before accessing the central cache directory to determine if the requested item is available in the cache of another user (Step 3), or requesting the content from an edge server (Step 4) or the web site (Step 5) on the lower bandwidth channel.

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